DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 209 686 CS 206 654

TITLE Handwriting Resource Book, Grades 1-7.
INSTITUTION British Columbia Dept. of Education, Victoria. Curriculum Development Branch.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-7719-8588-6
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 91p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cursive Writing; Elementary Secondary Education; *Handwriting Instruction; *Handwriting Readiness; *Handwriting Skills; Lesson Plans; *Manuscript Writing (Handlettering); Resource Materials; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Designed for use by both the elementary and the secondary school teacher, this resource book provides information and guidance on the teaching of printing and cursive writing skills. In the first part of the book, which deals with preparation, the physical requirements of handwriting are discussed and program planning suggestions offered. The second part concerns handwriting objectives and activities and focuses on the method whereby a student acquires and develops strong handwriting skills. The stages outlined take the student from readiness activities to printing, and from printing to refined cursive writing. The third part sets out some specific printed and cursive letter models, together with suggestions on how students can best be taught to imitate them, while the fourth part deals with the preparation and teaching of a handwriting lesson. This section identifies four distinct types of handwriting lesson, discusses the structural components of a lesson plan, and provides a chart containing suggestions for preparatory activities. It also includes sample lesson plans (one for each type of lesson). The fifth part covers evaluation and remediation and offers advice on how to isolate handwriting defects and take remedial measures. A list of resource materials and a bibliography are included. (HOD)

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# HANDWRITING RESOURCE BOOK

## GRADES 1-7

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CS206654

Issued by Authority of the Ministry of Education
Victoria, B.C.
1981

**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**
Main entry under title:
Handwriting resource book.

Cover title.
Bibliography: p.
ISBN 0-7719-8588-6

1. Penmanship. I. British Columbia. Division of School Programs. Curriculum Development Branch.

LB1590.H35 372.6'34 C81-092184-7

## Acknowledgments

The Ministry of Education gratefully appreciates the assistance and advice of

- the many teachers, school staffs, and district office personnel who contributed material and responded to draft versions of this book;
- the Elementary Language Arts Revision Committee and sub-committee members involved in the preparation of this resource book, in particular Maureen Archambault, Tom Heppell, and Roberta Johannessen;
- Irene Alexander and Charles Cuthbert; and
- the Ministry of Education Curriculum Consultant to the project, Ethne Erskine.

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# Introduction

This *Handwriting Resource Book* has been compiled to provide information and guidance on the teaching of printing and cursive writing skills. It is designed primarily to help elementary grade teachers meet the goals and outcomes set forth in the 1977 *Core Curriculum Guide* and the 1978 *Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide*. However secondary grade teachers will find that many of the suggestions in this *Resource Book* (e.g., on problem diagnosis, remediation, maintenance, and refinement) are useful for improving the handwriting skills of secondary students as well.

## Curriculum Goals for Handwriting

According to the curriculum guides, students should be taught to print and write neatly and legibly during their primary years. During their intermediate years they should then learn to write more quickly and easily while retaining neatness, accuracy, and legibility. This elementary training should make them able to express and communicate their ideas in handwriting that others can decipher. In order to achieve these goals the teacher should

- provide a purpose for writing;
- provide models for the students;
- attend to the mechanics of handwriting (e.g., slant, spacing, size, and formation);
- attend to the physical requirements of handwriting (e.g., good lighting, correct posture, and proper positioning of writing materials);
- provide regular instruction to diagnose and correct individual writing defects, and to develop fluency and legibility through practice;
- incorporate a concern for the mechanics and physical requirements of handwriting into all lessons involving written work, regardless of the subject area;
- provide a comfortable transition from printing to cursive writing by providing opportunities for students to read cursive writing before they are asked to undertake it (some time between year 2 and year 4);
- maintain students' printing skills throughout the elementary years;
- make provision for the needs of the left-handed student.

## Meeting Student Needs

Since students entering school have varying abilities to express themselves or concentrate, and since their mental ages or rates of learning also vary, it is important for teachers to take these factors into account. In the case of handwriting, the thinking process involved is as important as the mechanical process (this is why the curriculum goals stress the need for handwriting activities to be made purposeful and oriented toward the development of communication skills). At the same time a student's visual perception must be well developed, for printing and writing require the ability to see and remember tiny variations in letters in order to form them accurately. There must also be a degree of motor co-ordination between eye and hand, and good control of arm, hand, and finger muscles.

For students who have good hand-eye co-ordination, fine motor skills, and an ability to express themselves, the more traditional teaching approaches may be used from the outset. For students who have yet to develop these abilities to the point where they can achieve functional and satisfying results without anxiety, some alternative strategies will be required. (This *Resource Book* supplies a wide variety of handwriting activities, some models of cursive writing that allow for developmental variation, and material on evaluation and remediation.) Above all it is necessary to remember how important the element of self-satisfaction is for students: the handwriting that students produce should provide them with feelings of pleasure, accomplishment, and pride.

## Use of the Resource Book

In order to enhance the usefulness of this *Resource Book* we have sought to include as wide a range of information as possible. In "Part A: Preparation" the physical requirements of handwriting are discussed and program planning suggestions are offered.

"Part B: Handwriting Objectives and Activities" then focusses on the method whereby a student acquires and develops strong handwriting skills. Our discussion presents the process as occurring in six stages, arranged in a clear sequence. The stages take the student from readiness activities to printing, and from printing to refined cursive writing. For each stage, specific objectives derived from the curriculum goals are identified. Activities that will fulfill the objectives are also listed.

"Part C: Models" sets out some specific printed and cursive letter models, together with suggestions on how students can best be taught to imitate them. Because the Ministry of Education does not dictate the use of any one set of models, we have provided some alternative choices;

and teachers who would like to use letter models other than those reproduced here are free to do so. We simply suggest that students be allowed to stick with a single form of handwriting while acquiring and refining their skills, since they may produce poorly shaped letters and illegible writing if forced to make premature changes from form to form.

"Part D: Lesson Approaches" deals with the preparation and teaching of a handwriting lesson. Four distinct types of handwriting lesson are identified, the structural components of a lesson plan are discussed in some detail, and a chart containing suggestions for preparatory activities is provided. Sample lesson plans (one for each type of lesson) are also included.

"Part E: Evaluation and Remediation" offers advice on how to isolate handwriting defects and take remedial measures. The material focusses on specific problems commonly encountered by students and is arranged schematically for easy reference.

Finally, for teachers who require extra information on any particular topic, we have included a list of resource materials and a bibliography. Since many of the publications listed are recent, these should give teachers access to the latest thinking on the subject of handwriting.

## Definition of Terms

The following definitions are presented in order to clarify the terms used throughout this resource book.

alignment — the relationship of handwriting to defined lines

fluidity — the act of writing reasonably rapidly with an easy, controlled, and continuous motion

formation — the actual shape of a letter

handwriting — all written forms including printing, cursive writing, and loop-free writing

loop-free — a simple Italic-based cursive writing style

printing — upper and lower case unjoined letters

size — the dimension of a letter relative to a set of guidelines

slant — the inclination of a letter away from the vertical toward the right

space — the spacing between letters or between words

stroke — a line made in one movement

uniformity — consistency of each handwriting element

cursive writing — upper and lower case letters that are slanted and joined

# Part A: Preparation

## Physical Set-Up

In order to provide a suitable environment for teaching handwriting, teachers should consider the following requirements.

Room Setting: There must be adequate lighting and proper ventilation. Temperatures should be maintained at a comfortable level.

Handwriting Examples: The letters of the printed and/or cursive alphabets should be prominently displayed in the classroom. You may also wish to have individual copies of the alphabet taped to students' desks. There should also be a variety of other printed or written materials on display, such as charts, posters, labels, chalkboard examples (see figures 1 and 2), and good handwriting samples produced by students.

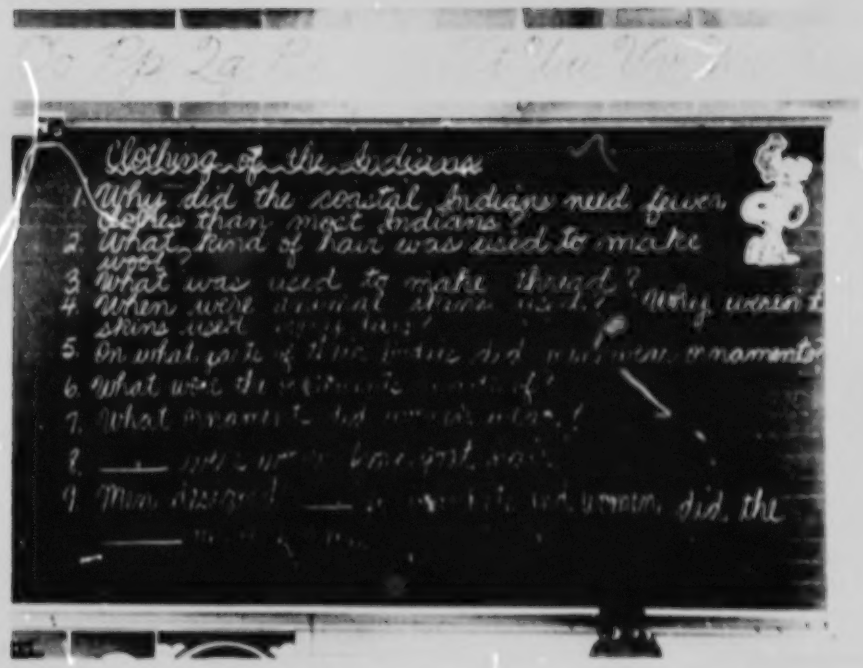

Clothing of the Indians
1. Why did the coastal Indians need fewer clothes than most Indians?
2. What kind of hair was used to make wool?
3. What was used to make thread?
4. When were animal skins used?
5. On what parts of the body did they wear ornaments?
6. What was the weather like?
7. What animals did they hunt?
8. ____
9. Men hunted ____ what work did the women do?
____

Figure 1

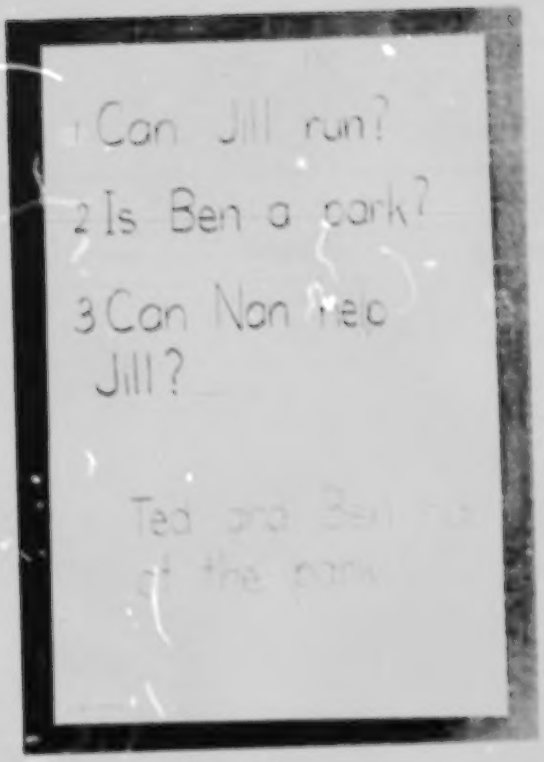



Figure 2

Chalkboard:

The chalkboard should be ruled so demonstration and practice letters can be produced easily. Seatwork exercises should be written on the upper portions of the board so that the lower portions are left free for students to practise on. Left-handed students should be seated on the left side of the board, and small individual chalkboards should be provided for primary students.

Seating:

Desks and chairs should allow students to sit comfortably, feet flat on the floor (with some space between their knees and the desk top), with their arms resting easily on the desk tops (see Figures 3 and 4). The writing surface should be kept clean and uncluttered.

Figure 3

Figure 4

Tools and Materials:

The tools and materials you require will depend largely on the students' stage of handwriting development. They may include chalk; wax crayons, primary pencils, HB pencils, thick and fine point felt pens, ball point pens, fountain pens, large sheets of unlined paper, drawing books (with or without base lines), teacher-made wide-lined paper, wide-lined foolscap, exercise books, interlined paper, and narrow lined paper or books.

## Posture

Teachers should, while encouraging students to adopt a comfortable position, try to instil the following posture habits.

- feet kept flat on the floor
- back and shoulders kept straight
- body leaning slightly forward
- elbow of writing arm resting on desk
- free arm used to steady paper
- wrist kept straight
- paper kept slanted (as close to a 45° angle as is comfortable)
- writing tool held lightly between thumb and index finger
- index finger kept slightly curved

Figure 5

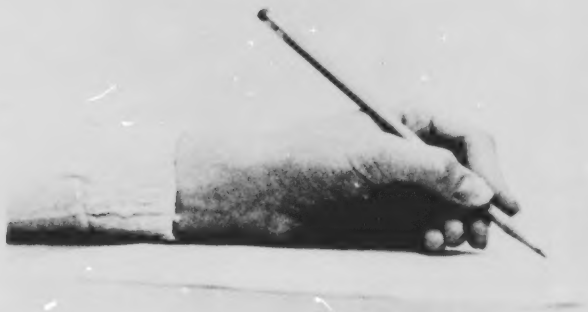
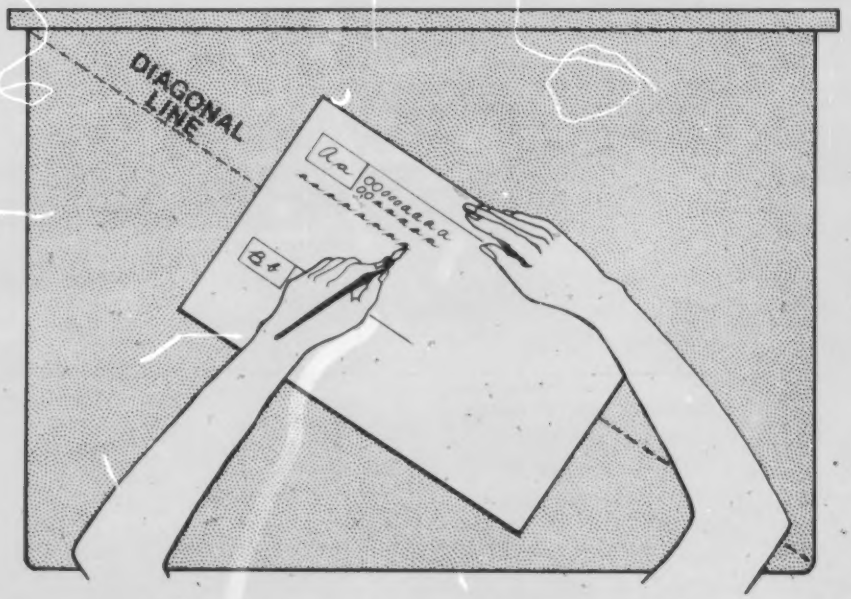


Figure 6

Figure 7



## Checklist for Program Evaluation

It is suggested that teachers use the following checklist on an ongoing basis for evaluating their handwriting programs.

- Do I ensure that ventilation, lighting, and temperature are suitable?
- Do I provide a relaxed, encouraging atmosphere for the students?
- Do I provide suitable handwriting models?
- Do I display good examples of student printed and written work?
- Do I position seatwork exercises on chalkboards and charts so they can be seen and read easily by all the students?
- Do I provide suitable seating for each student?
- Do I make sure that students' desks are clean and uncluttered?
- Am I sensitive to the needs of the left-handed student?
- Do I help students acquire the correct posture and position habits for handwriting?
- Do I instruct students to position their paper correctly?
- Do I instruct students to hold their writing tools correctly?
- Do I provide regular writing instruction?
- Do I use the best means available to motivate my students?
- Do I individualize instruction as required?
- Do I set realistic goals according to the abilities and maturity of my students?
- Do I encourage good handwriting habits in all written work?
- Do I provide for student self-evaluation?
- Do I encourage my students to compare their handwriting with the model they hope to achieve?
- Do I exhibit a positive attitude towards handwriting?

## A Time For Handwriting

Because handwriting involves mastering many mechanics, a definite amount of time must be spent each week teaching and having students practise the necessary skills. While setting aside a regular time is a good idea, teachers should encourage good handwriting techniques in all subject areas at all times. Generally speaking, handwriting lessons should

- be short (15 - 20 minutes);
- focus on definite skills and purposes;
- be early in the day;
- be a regular and formal part of the curriculum.

While handwriting skills are being developed, formal daily lessons will be needed. As the students gain proficiency, however, the teacher may simply schedule handwriting lessons according to their needs.

## Left-Handedness

Studies indicate that 10 to 15% of all beginning students have a marked left-handed preference in writing. If these students are forced to write using the right hand, they may experience reading difficulties, speech irregularities, and anxiety. Therefore, the beginning student who shows definite preference for using the left hand should be encouraged to continue using it. However, those who show no preference for either the left or right hand should be encouraged to use the right hand.

A few simple tests that can be used to determine whether a student is right- or left-handed are listed below. These should be completed as early as possible (in kindergarten or grade 1), and each one should be performed at least three times. Do not try to give all the tests at the same time, however.

- reaching for a distant object
- cutting along a curving line drawn on paper
- throwing a ball using one hand
- winding a ball of string or wool

- setting the hands of a large clock or watch
- receiving objects one at a time
- crayoning a simple picture using heavy and light pressure

Once it is established that a student is left-handed, it becomes imperative that this left-handedness be supported in what is a predominantly right-handed environment. A few specific suggestions are listed below:

- Group left-handed students together for handwriting instruction at desks and chalkboards.
- Allow left-handed students to print and write at the chalkboard (where there is greater freedom of arm movement) until they have learned correct letter formation. Writing at the chalkboard will also teach them to keep their hands below the line of printing or writing. (see figure 8)
- Check to see that the paper is sloped to the right and that the writing arm is in line with the paper (see diagrams).

Figure 8

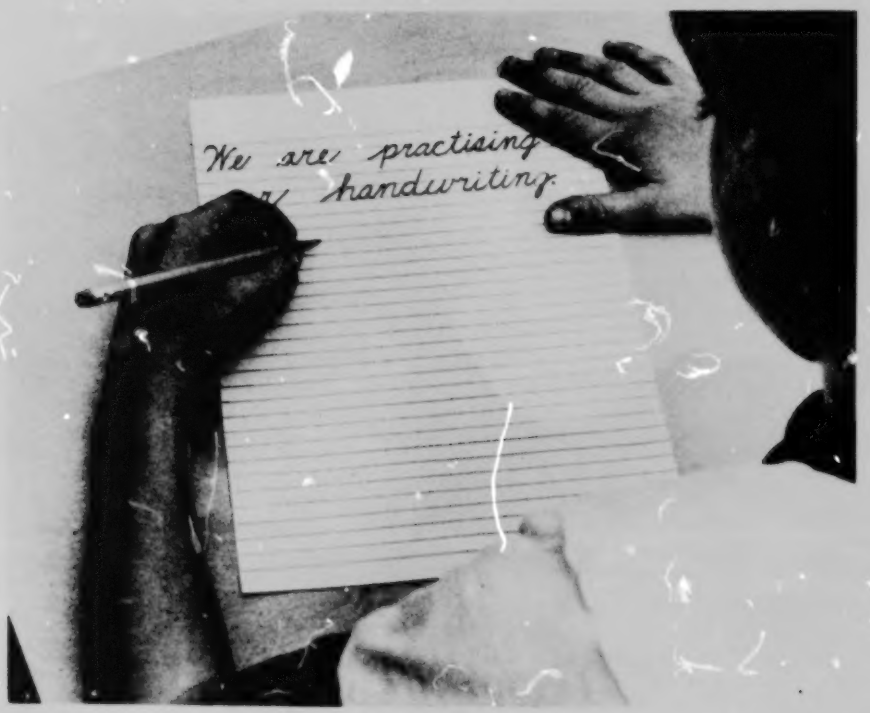



Figure 9

- Check that the left-handed student's pen or pencil is pointed into the body: the pen or pencil should be pulled rather than pushed. Results may be more satisfying if a left-handed student holds the pencil or pen slightly higher than right-handed children do, so that he or she may easily see what is being written.

# Part B: Handwriting Objectives and Activities

## Stage One: Readiness or Pre-Printing

## (Kindergarten - Grade 1)

### Objectives

During this stage, students should learn to perform many tasks involving gross motor skills, perform a few tasks involving fine motor skills, and follow instructions of location or direction. More specifically they should be able to

- reconstruct simple puzzles or models;
- reproduce simple shapes and forms with a variety of media;
- color within specific boundaries;
- draw shapes and lines on a base line;
- move within a given area following specific directions during rhythmic activities;
- recognize the meaning of location or direction words such as left, right, top, bottom, up, down, over, and under,
- understand words related to printing such as press, dot, slant, touch, slide, lift, curve, straight, light, and heavy,
- recognize and name the upper and lower case letters and the numerals 0-9;
- recognize some printed words.

## Activities

The teacher should provide many manipulative, visual, and verbal activities to help students achieve the objectives for this stage. Here is a list of possible activities that the teacher may choose from.

- playing with toys
- telephone dialling
- setting the table
- matching pieces in puzzles and pictures
- tearing paper into given shapes and sizes
- cutting with scissors
- finger painting
- modelling plasticine and clay
- drawing on chalkboard
- painting and drawing on large paper with primary pencils, large crayons, felt pens, and brushes
- tracing the outlines of large letter shapes made from felt, sandpaper, etc.
- moving rhythmically to various types of music
- pretending to conduct while listening to music
- balancing, controlling, and comparing objects of various sizes
- coloring or shading within defined spaces, using large crayons, chalk, or felt pens
- putting story card pictures in sequence and re-telling the story
- reproducing given designs with various materials (e.g., beads, blocks, and colored pieces of paper)
- identifying similarities and differences in a variety of shapes and forms (e.g., large, small, round, wide, thin, tall, and short)

- identifying spatial relationships such as left, right, the top, the bottom, up, down, over, and under
- identifying the shapes and orientation of lines (e.g., straight, curved, slanted, sloped)
- identifying, naming, and reproducing in various materials, shapes such as circles, ovals, squares, and triangles
- dictating personal experiences that the teacher can record in print on charts
- recognizing, matching, and reading proper names or familiar words from experience charts and classroom labels
- identifying, naming, and reproducing printed upper and lower case letters and numerals using a variety of media
- labelling and recognizing the names of objects around the classroom
- reproducing shapes, letters, and numerals on a base line such as a fold or a line on large paper, or a line on the chalkboard
- watching the teacher or an older student produce good printing
- recognizing strengths and weaknesses in their own letter formation (or that of their peers) through observation and discussion

## Stage Two: Printing

### (Grade 1)

### Objectives

During this stage students should learn to perform many tasks involving gross motor skills and some tasks involving fine motor skills. More specifically they should be able to

- print the upper and lower case letters and the numerals in legible and uniform form within defined lines;
- print words using uniform spacing;
- progress from the use of large primary pencils to standard HB pencils;
- print words using an even pressure that facilitates ease of writing and increases legibility;
- use printing for many purposes;
- gain a feeling of pleasure and pride in the process and product of printing;
- evaluate printing quality with the assistance of the teacher.

### Activities

The teacher should provide activities that further the development of fine motor skills. The teacher should also provide an opportunity for students to practise printing. The manipulative, visual, and verbal activities listed for Stage One: Readiness or Pre-Printing should be continued. Here are some further activity suggestions.

- reproducing shapes, letters, and numerals on wide-lined paper that shows base, middle, and top lines
- reproducing shapes, letters, and numerals between widely spaced lines on the chalkboard
- making letter shapes with plasticine and clay

- tracing large simple outline pictures and letters with large pencils, crayons, and felt pens (gradually progressing to smaller more complicated outlines using printing tools with finer points)

- coloring within boundaries that define increasingly complicated patterns

- drawing and coloring various designs from models (have students use large printing tools at first; then have them gradually progress to using smaller printing tools

- as a warm-up to printing activities, reproducing straight line and circle patterns between guide lines (base, middle, and top) on the chalkboard and on large sheets of paper (have students use large printing tools at first; then gradually reduce both the spacing between the lines and the size of the printing tool)

- copying labels, names, familiar words based on the reading program, words from experience charts, etc. first onto teacher-made lined paper (stencil using 3 guide lines — the lines should be wide-spaced), then onto wide-lined foolscap

- copying words, phrases, and sentences from experience charts and chalkboard work first onto teacher-made lined paper then later onto wide-lined foolscap

- printing original phrases and short sentences (referring to various words around the classroom on charts, on labels, on the chalkboard, or in picture dictionaries)

- printing some words and sentences in wide-lined exercise books

- studying examples of good printing done by the teacher, by older students, or by themselves

- choosing examples of their best work (with the assistance of the teacher) for possible display

## Stage Three: Transition from Printing to Cursive Writing

## (Grades 2 - 4)

### Objectives

During this stage students should learn to perform many more tasks involving fine motor skills. They should

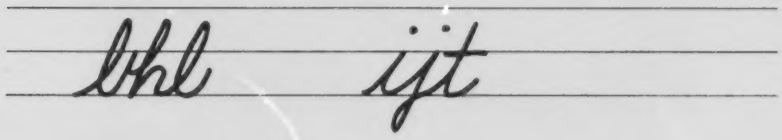
- perform a reasonably good standard of printing;
- recognize the appearance, use, and advantages of cursive writing;
- read some cursive writing such as labels, dates, names;
- write unjoined cursive upper and lower case letters and numerals in legible and uniform form;
- join cursive lower case letters of similar formations (such letters are identified in "Part C: Models");
- derive a sense of pleasure and pride in the process and product of printing;
- evaluate the quality of printing and cursive writing samples (with the assistance of the teacher).

### Activities

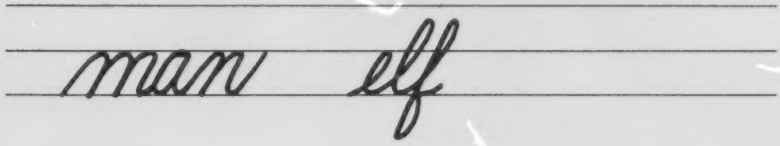
During this relatively short stage, children need a great deal of repetitive practice to become familiar with the cursive forms of the letters and to learn how to produce them easily. As students develop their fine motor skills, gradually reduce the size of the spacing between the guidelines until the size of their writing is the same as the size of their printing. The following is a suggested list of activities.

- continuing suggested gross and fine motor skills activities listed in Stages One and Two
- printing seatwork using a standard HB pencil and concentrating on proper letter formation, spacing, slant, etc.
- printing labels, booklet covers, and maps on a hand-drawn base line using proper letter formation, spacing, etc.

- recognizing and matching the cursive form of a word with its printed form on labels, posters, and charts around the classroom by playing oral games and card games
- tracing cursive lower and upper case letter shapes made of felt, sandpaper, etc.
- making cursive letters in the air, using large arm movements
- making large cursive letters on the chalkboard and on large sheets of unlined paper using large writing tools, to develop a flow and ease of movement
- modelling large cursive letters in plasticine or clay
- making large cursive letters in fingerpaint and with large paint brushes
- participating in art activities using three-dimensional materials (e.g., carving letter shapes in styrofoam or soap, or inscribing cursive forms in soft wood)
- writing cursive lower case letters unjoined, making tall letters two spaces high, and small letters one space high (on teacher-made wide-lined paper)
- joining lower case cursive letters wih similar formations into nonsense groupings on wide-lined foolscap, e.g.:



- joining lower case cursive letters with similar formations into simple and familiar words on wide-lined foolscap; e.g.:



- writing upper case letters on teacher-made wide-lined paper
- writing lower and upper case letters on wide-lined foolscap and exercise books (keeping tall letters two spaces high and small letters one space high)
- studying examples of good written work done by the teacher or by older students
- circling their own "best" letter from among those produced during practice time

## Stage Four: Beginning Cursive Writing

## (Grades 2 - 4)

### Objectives

During this stage, students should develop their cursive writing skills. Specifically they should

- join lower case letters into words with some degree of uniformity of size and slant;
- write words that contain upper and lower case letters;
- write legibly with an HB pencil, using even pressure;
- maintain a good standard of printing for appropriate purposes;
- gain a feeling of pleasure and pride in the process and product of handwriting;
- evaluate handwriting quality with the assistance of the teacher.

### Activities

Many of the activities at this Stage will overlap with activities for Stage Three, as students make the transition from printing to cursive writing. All written work at this stage must be closely supervised to ensure that letter formation, size, slant, and spacing remain uniform. As cursive writing skills develop, students should reduce the size of their writing by moving from wide-lined foolscap and exercise books to interlined foolscap and exercise books. Most handwriting at this stage should be done with a standard HB pencil. Here are the suggested activities:

- continuing some of the art activities listed under Stage Three
- joining lower case letters into simple and familiar words on wide-lined foolscap (paying particular attention to joining the letters)
- writing words using upper and lower case letters on wide-lined foolscap without joining upper case letters to the lower case letters
- writing first lower and upper case letters, then words, then sentences, and finally all work on interlined foolscap and exercise books

- writing silly sentences or tongue twisters that repeat particular letters (e.g., Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers)

- writing words that repeat letters (or using the dictionary to find them); students should understand the word meanings

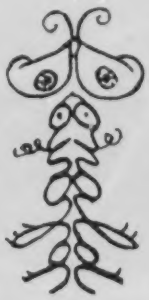
- writing the names of each student in the class to review the upper case letters (this exercise could be adapted to include the names of rivers, provinces, cities, lakes, teachers, etc.)

- using a variety of tools to print on a hand-drawn base line for specialized purposes, (e.g., to make posters, labels, booklet covers, cards, invitations, maps, charts, etc.); see figure 10

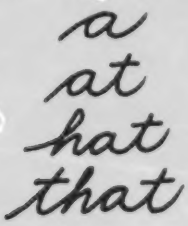
Figure 10

- writing all work on wide-lined foolscap and exercise books
- writing short "thank you letters" and special day cards
- writing poems and short paragraphs
- participating in a variety of amusing activities such as

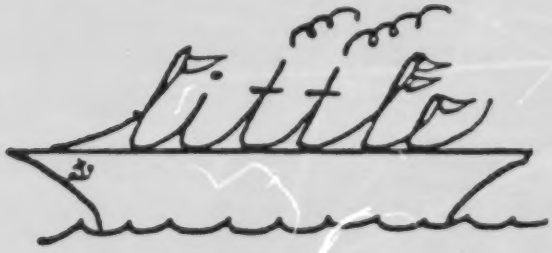
creating letter monsters,



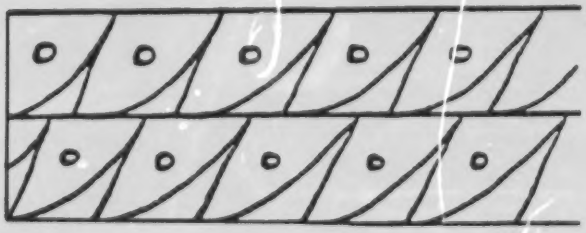
building word pyramids,




making pictures out of words,




or building border patterns



- examining good written work produced by the teacher or by older students and comparing it with their own
- keeping a self-evaluation chart with the assistance of the teacher
- displaying good examples of their own written and printed work

## Stage Five: Development and Maintenance

## (Grades 4 - 5)

### Objectives

During this stage students should make extensive functional use of cursive writing and develop fluidity while maintaining legibility. Specifically students should

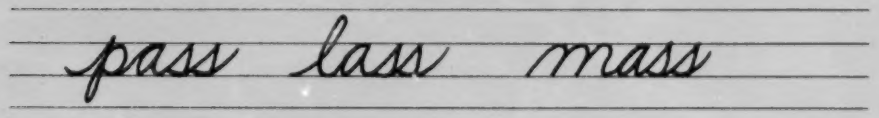
- keep letter formation, size, slant, spacing, and alignment uniform;
- reduce the size of their handwriting to one space for upper case letters and to between one-third and one-half space for lower case letters;
- write with uniform pressure, using a good quality medium ball point pen;
- maintain a good standard of printing for appropriate purposes;
- maintain pleasure and pride in the process and product of handwriting;
- evaluate handwriting quality with some assistance from the teacher.

### Activities

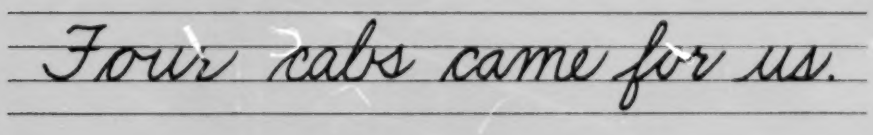
Many of the activities listed under Stage Four will be useful at this stage. The emphasis is on maintaining uniform letter formation, spacing, slant, and stroke while reducing letter size. The ball point pen is introduced during this stage. Here are some activity suggestions.

- continuing some of the activities listed under Stage Four
- practising joined ovals of diminishing size on regular foolscap
- writing all work on interlined foolscap and exercise books — gradually reducing the size of the writing to one space on regular foolscap and exercise books
- using a good quality medium ball point pen where appropriate
- using an HB pencil for appropriate work in art, arithmetic, map marking, etc.

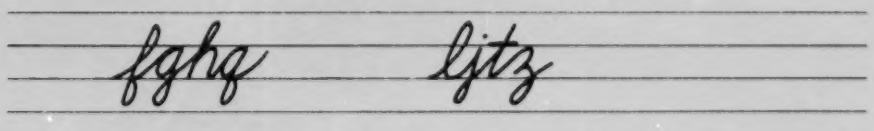
- keeping a diary or journal of personal or class events
- preparing samples of good cursive writing for display purposes and for beginning handwriting students to examine
- writing those letters that are difficult to form properly by choosing poems which repeat a certain letter
- writing rhyming words containing problem letters



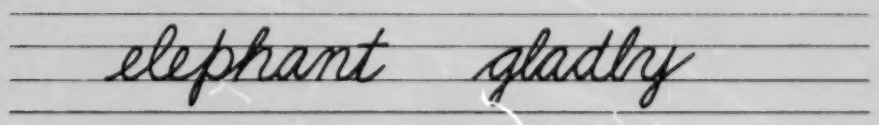
- writing sentences using words that contain difficult joins



- writing groups of letters containing above-the-line strokes and below-the-line strokes, e.g.:



- finding and writing words containing several above-the-line strokes and several below-the-line strokes, e.g.:



- writing invitations, letters, postcards, labels, lists, etc., using a lined guide under unlined paper
- printing labels, invitations, booklet covers, maps, charts, items for school newspaper, posters, etc., using a lined guide under unlined paper (print size will be determined by the specific activity)

- writing to pen pals in another school or district
- circling in red pencil letters or words showing good writing style
- using the student self-evaluation chart (see back of booklet)
- exchanging writing samples to proofread for legibility and for attention to slant, spacing, size and formation
- observing good written work done by others and comparing it with their own

## Stage Six: Refinement and Individualization

## (Grades 6 - 7)

### Objectives

During this stage students should

- maintain a high degree of legibility and uniformity in all aspects of handwriting;
- write with increasing speed and fluidity;
- write with an acceptable degree of alignment without the use of guidelines;
- develop, if desired, some aspects of a personal yet legible style in handwriting and printing;
- select appropriate writing tools for various purposes, and know how to use and maintain those tools;
- maintain a good standard of printing where appropriate;
- maintain pleasure and pride in the process and product of handwriting;
- evaluate handwriting quality.

### Activities

Although the emphasis at Stage Six is on refinement activities, many of the remedial and maintenance activities listed under Stage Five still apply at this time (see the material on lesson types in Part D). Much experimentation with various writing and printing forms and tools will be necessary in order for students to develop personalized and legible styles. Here are some activity suggestions.

- continuing some of the activities listed under Stage Five with emphasis on reviewing and refining the elements of handwriting involving letter formation, size, slant, spacing and alignment
- writing all work on regular or narrow-lined foolscap and exercise books (the upper case letters should be one space high and the lower case letters one-third to one-half space high)

- choosing good quality writing tools such as fountain, felt-tipped, floating ball, nylon-tipped, and straight pens with various nibs for appropriate purposes

- using an HB pencil for appropriate work in art, arithmetic, map-making, etc.

- practising printing and writing without the use of guidelines for appropriate purposes (e.g., map-making, charts, posters, labels, title pages, book jackets, letter writing), paying close attention to sizing, spacing, and alignment

- re-copying a draft of a corrected composition in their best writing

- printing newspaper ads within boundaries for refining spacing, alignment, and sizing skills

- practising writing and printing with very small legible letters that can be used for filling out forms (e.g. bank forms, score cards, some school record forms, application forms, registration or entry forms for camps, sports, or competitions)

- examining and discussing the different forms of printing used in various art and classical books, and in folk tale, fairy tale, nursery rhyme, and fable collections

- examining various forms of printing from printing catalogues and discussing their appropriate uses (e.g., announcements, invitations, greeting cards)

- making rough notes on films, student reports, field trips, guest lectures (the emphasis should be on speed and legibility to enable rewriting or discussing at a later time)

- taking notes from dictation or chalkboard with emphasis on speed and fluidity

- experimenting with various forms of writing to develop a personalized yet legible signature

- observing good written work done by others and comparing it with their own

- circling letters or words showing good writing style

- using the student self-evaluation chart (see back of *Resource Book)*

# A Developmental Chart for Handwriting

This chart lists (for each stage) the specific objectives derived from the Curriculum Goals for Handwriting.

| STAGE ONE: READINESS OR PRE-PRINTING (Kindergarten - Grade 1) | STAGE TWO: PRINTING (Grade 1) | STAGE THREE: TRANSITION FROM PRINTING TO CURSIVE WRITING (Grades 2 - 4) |
|---|---|---|
| • perform many tasks involving gross motor skills | • perform many tasks involving gross motor skills | • print reasonably well |
| • perform a few tasks involving fine motor skills | • perform some tasks involving fine motor skills | • perform an increasing number of tasks involving fine motor skills |
| • follow instructions of location and direction | • print the upper and lower case letters and numerals in legible and uniform manner within defined lines | • recognize the appearance, use and advantage of cursive writing |
| • move within a given area following specific directions during rhythmic activities | • print words using uniform spacing | • read some cursive writing such as labels, dates, names |
| • follow left to right progression in a variety of activities | • progress from the use of large primary pencils to standard HB pencils | • write unjoined cursive upper and lower case letters and numerals in legible and uniform form |
| • reconstruct simple puzzles or models | • print words using a pencil pressure that facilitates ease of writing and legibility | • join cursive lower case letters of similar formations |
| • reproduce simple shapes and forms with a variety of media | • use printing for many purposes | • gain a feeling of pleasure and pride in the process and product of printing |
| • colour within specific boundaries | • gain a feeling of pleasure and pride in the process and product of printing | • evaluate printing and handwriting quality with the assistance of the teacher |
| • draw shapes and lines on a base line | • evaluate printing quality with the assistance of the teacher | |
| • demonstrate an understanding of words related to printing such as: press, dot, slant, touch, slide, lift, curve, straight, light, heavy | | |
| • recognize and name the upper and lower case letters and the numerals 0 - 9 | | |
| • recognize some printed words | | |

## STAGE FOUR: BEGINNING CURSIVE WRITING (Grades 2 - 4)

- join lower case letters into words with some degree of uniformity in size and slant
- write words which contain upper and lower case letters
- write legibly with an HB pencil using pressure which facilitates ease of writing legibility
- maintain a good standard of printing for appropriate purposes
- gain a feeling of pleasure and pride in the process and product of handwriting
- evaluate handwriting quality with the assistance of the teacher

## STAGE FIVE: DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE (Grades 4 - 5)

- maintain a high degree of legibility and uniformity with regard to formation, size, slant, spacing and alignment
- reduce the size of handwriting to one space for upper case letters and to between one-third and one-half space for lower case letters
- make extensive functional use of cursive writing
- write legibly and with uniform pressure with a good quality medium ball point pen
- maintain a good standard of printing for appropriate purposes
- maintain pleasure and pride in the process and product of handwriting
- evaluate handwriting quality with some assistance of the teacher

## STAGE SIX: REFINEMENT AND INDIVIDUALISM (Grades 6 - 7)

- maintain a high degree of legibility and uniformity in all aspects of handwriting
- write with increasing speed and fluidity
- write with an acceptable degree of alignment without the use of guidelines
- develop, if desired, some aspects of personal yet legible style in handwriting and printing
- utilize some skills in the selection, use and maintenance of various writing tools
- maintain a good standard of printing where appropriate
- maintain pleasure and pride in the process and product of handwriting
- evaluate handwriting quality

# Part C: Models

## Choosing a Set of Models

This section of the *Resource Book* sets out some specific printed and cursive letter models, together with suggestions on how students can best be taught to imitate them. Because the Ministry of Education does not dictate the use of any one set of models, we have provided some alternative choices; and teachers who would like to use letter models other than those reproduced here are free to do so. We simply suggest that students be allowed to stick with a single form of handwriting while acquiring and refining their skills, since they may produce poorly shaped letters and illegible writing if forced to make premature changes from form to form.

All students should begin by learning how to print. Since ball-and-stick printing (in which vertically aligned shapes are produced using a combination of balls and sticks) is one of the most commonly used introductory forms, we begin by explaining how its letters are drawn and in what sequence they can most easily be taught. Once students have mastered this form of printing they can move on to cursive writing in either the looped or loop-free style.

The method proposed here for teaching looped cursive writing is fairly straightforward and should present no particular problems. However, for teachers who wish to teach loop-free writing we recommend the use of egg-and-stick printing as a bridge between ball-and-stick printing and the loop-free cursive. Egg-and-stick letters are slightly smaller than ball-and-stick letters and their slight degree of slant gives students an opportunity to master this important feature of cursive writing while still at the printing stage. Upon consideration, some teachers may decide to teach egg-and-stick as the introductory form, dispensing with ball-and-stick printing altogether. (By the same token, other teachers may decide to use egg-and-stick printing as an introduction to looped cursive.)



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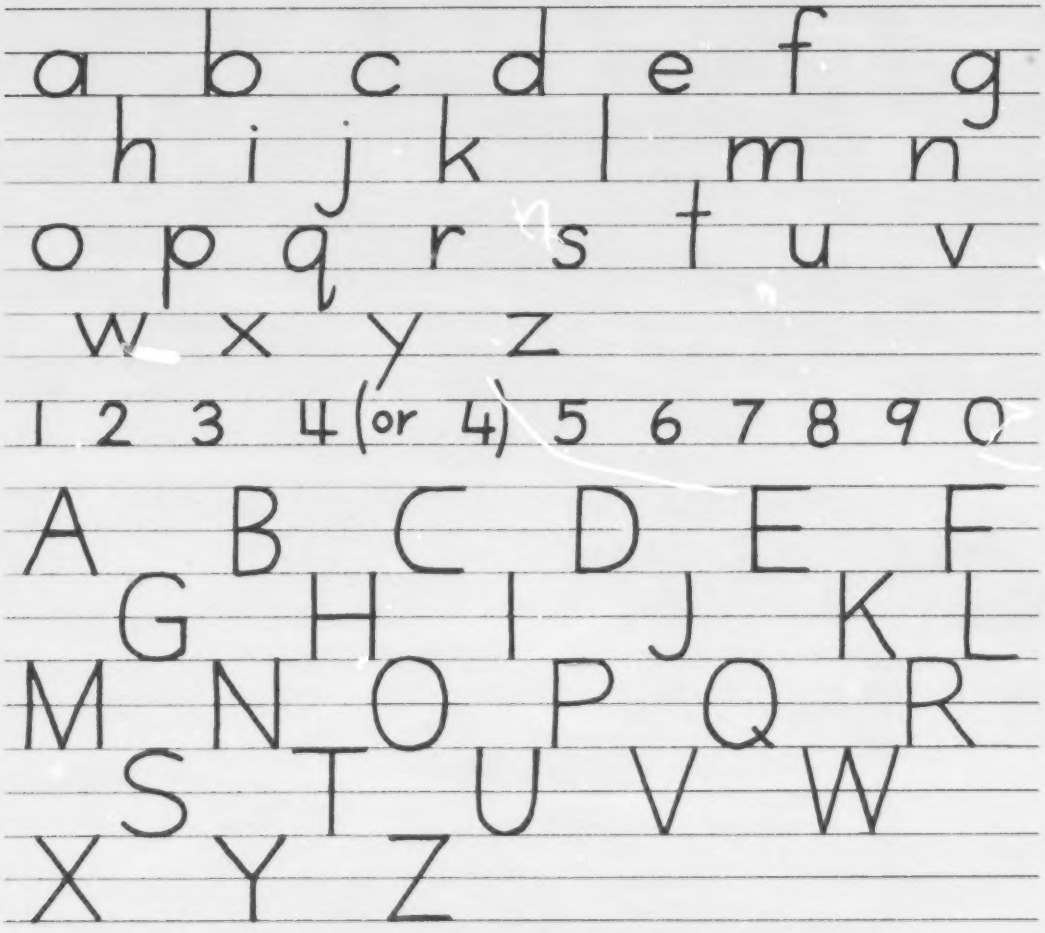
## Ball-and-Stick Printing

### Letter Models




### Sequence

The best sequence for teaching letters of the printed alphabet cannot be dictated. It must depend on the teaching situation. Teachers should simply consider the following points when deciding what sequence to use:

- lower case letters can be presented initially, as they receive the most use; upper case forms of letters that have identical upper and lower case letters can be introduced next; and the remaining upper case letters can be introduced as they are required;



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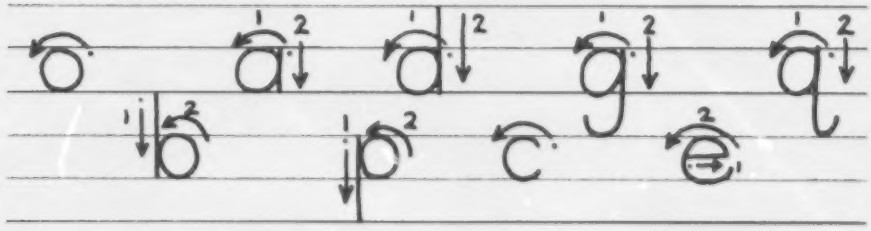
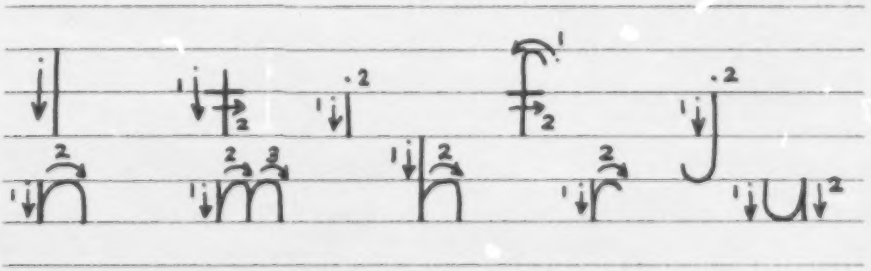
- each child should learn as quickly as possible to print his or her own name, even if there has been no formal emphasis on practising the component letters;
- vowels should be introduced early so that words can be printed almost immediately;
- letters with simple shapes (such as the lower case i and o) can be introduced first ;
- letters with similar structures can be grouped together (e.g., l, t, i,); however, easily confused letters (such as b, d, or p, g, q) should be well separated in a teaching sequence;
- certain upper case letters can be presented early (e.g., T, I, and A, which are the letters most frequently used at the beginning of simple sentences);
- in classes using a phonetic approach to the reading program, sounds and letters can be introduced concurrently.

## A Sample Sequence

Here is one possible sequence for teaching printed letters: begin with lower case letters that have circular formations and straight lines;



next introduce lower case letters that have straight lines and curving strokes;





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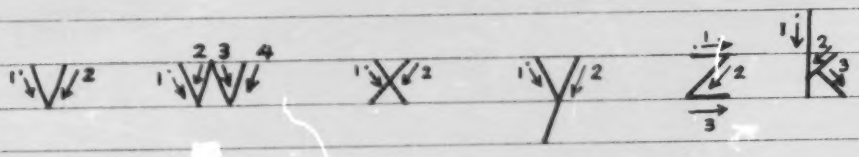
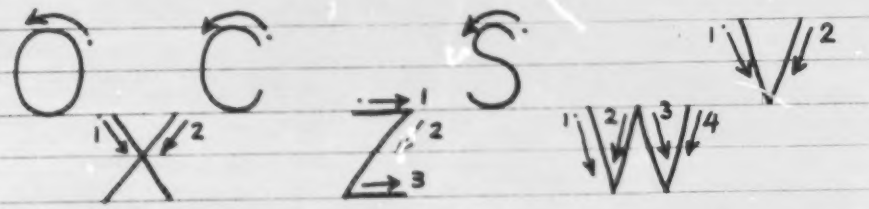
introduce lower case letters that have straight lines and slanting strokes,

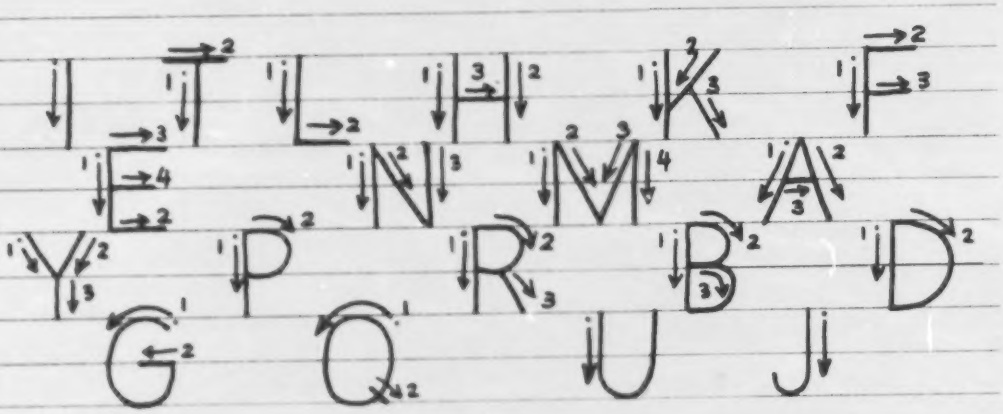


then introduce the lower case letter that is a continuous series of curves;

follow this by introducing upper case letters that are identical in form to the corresponding lower case letters;



introduce the remaining upper case letters;





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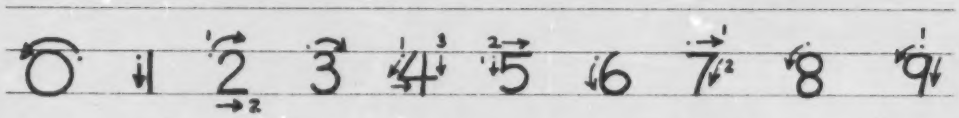
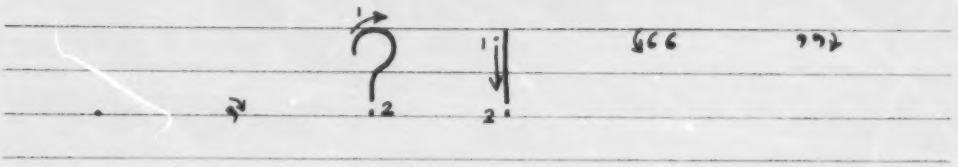
end up with the numerals,



and the punctuation marks.





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## Looped Cursive Writing

### A Deve!opmental Approach

This section provides a set of looped cursive upper and lower case letter models. The lower case letters have been presented in two sizes (relative to the line sizes on standard lined paper). Students can begin working on larger-sized letters and make them smaller once they have mastered the technique. Each of the upper case letters, on the other hand, has been presented in several different forms. These different forms are developmentally related (i.e., the most complex form can be developed from the simplest form through a series of intermediate stages). Students with good handwriting skills may be able to move directly from the simplest form of a letter to a more fluid cursive form, bypassing some of the intermediate stages. Those whose handwriting skills are not as well developed may have to start with the simplest form and progress through the stages as their abilities develop. (Not all students should be expected to master the most fluid forms.) The stages allow such students to begin with letters that

- can be effectively produced at slower speeds;
- start at specific and well-defined points;
- contain only essential curves;
- are produced with an almost complete absence of either beginning or internal loops;
- enable them to achieve functional and satisfying results without anxiety.

The progress to the more fluid forms is natural, and for each letter a student's progress should be governed by changing abilities and/or attitudes. However, a student should only make the change from one developmental stage to the next in consultation with the teacher. The teacher should ensure that the student does not shift back and forth from one stage of a letter to another (encourage consistency).



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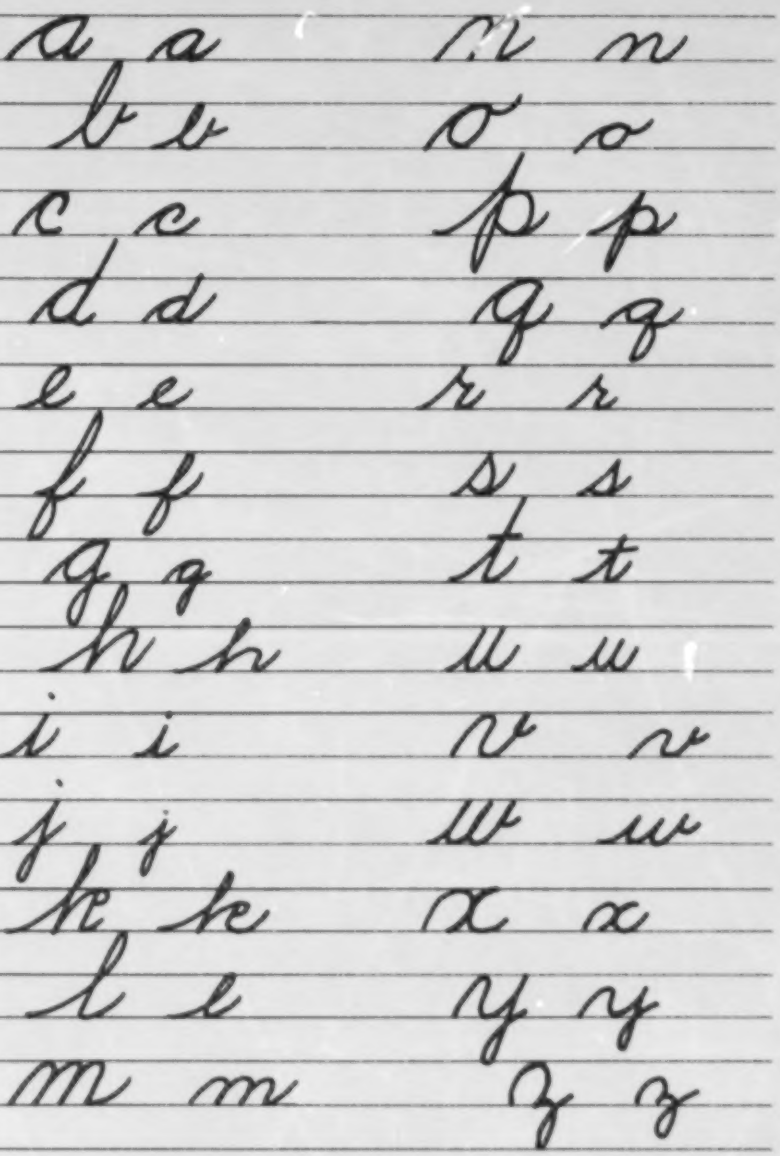
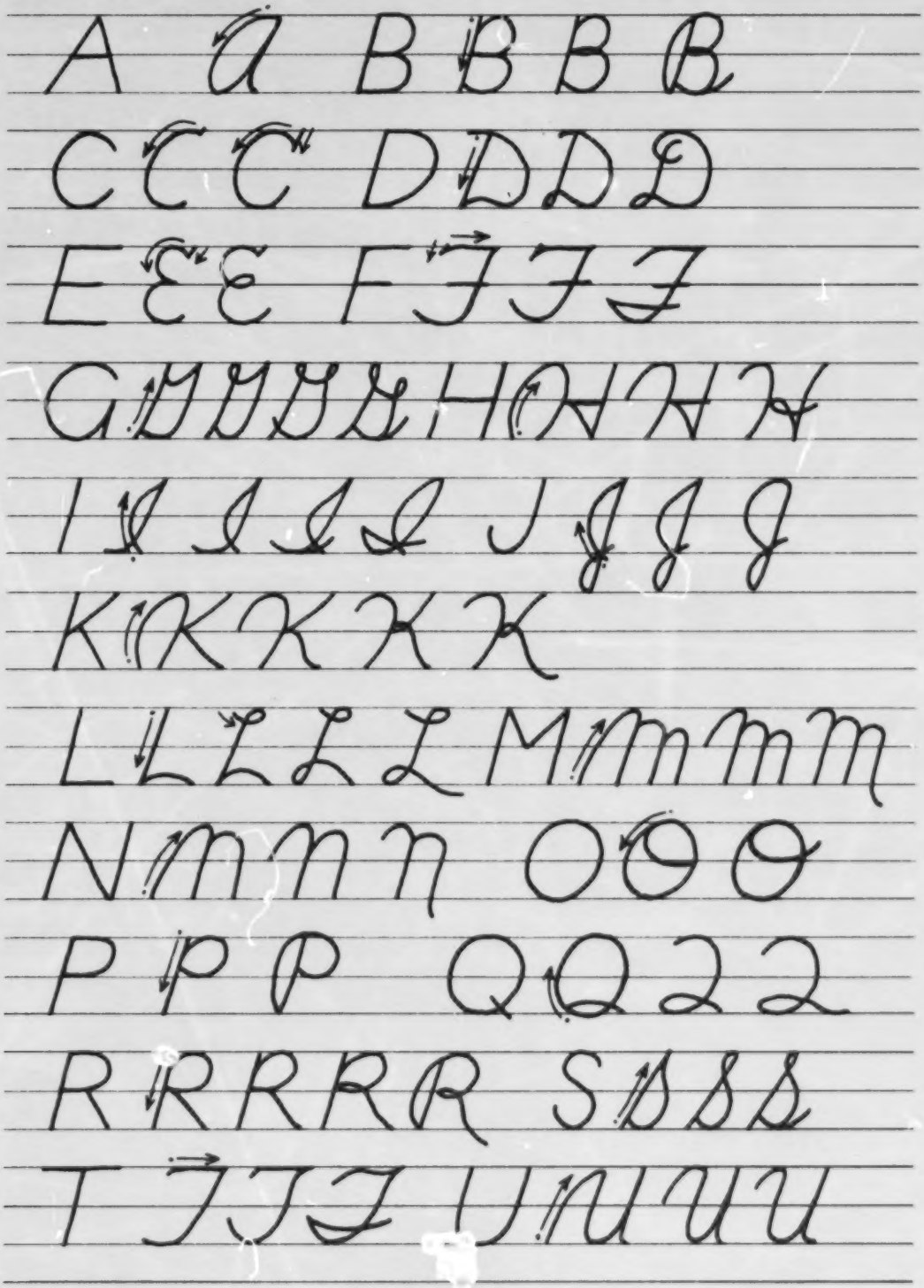
## Lower Case Letter Models



Upper Case Letter Models (Developmental)





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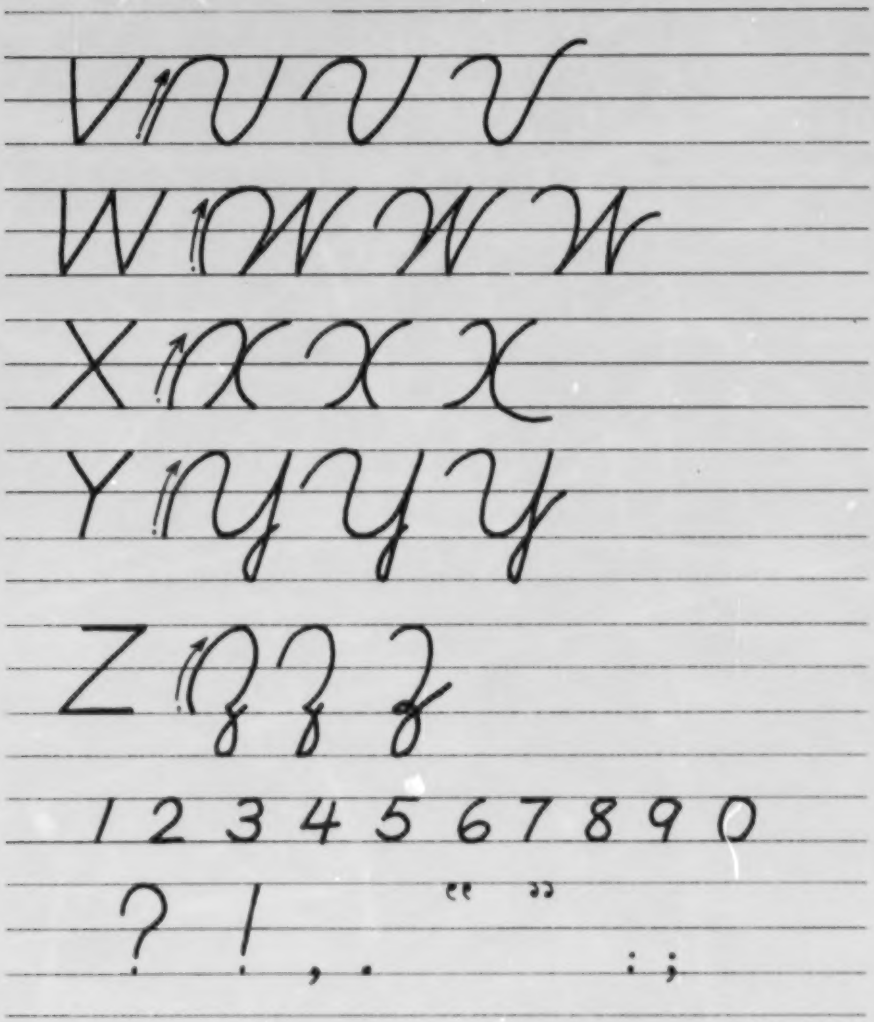




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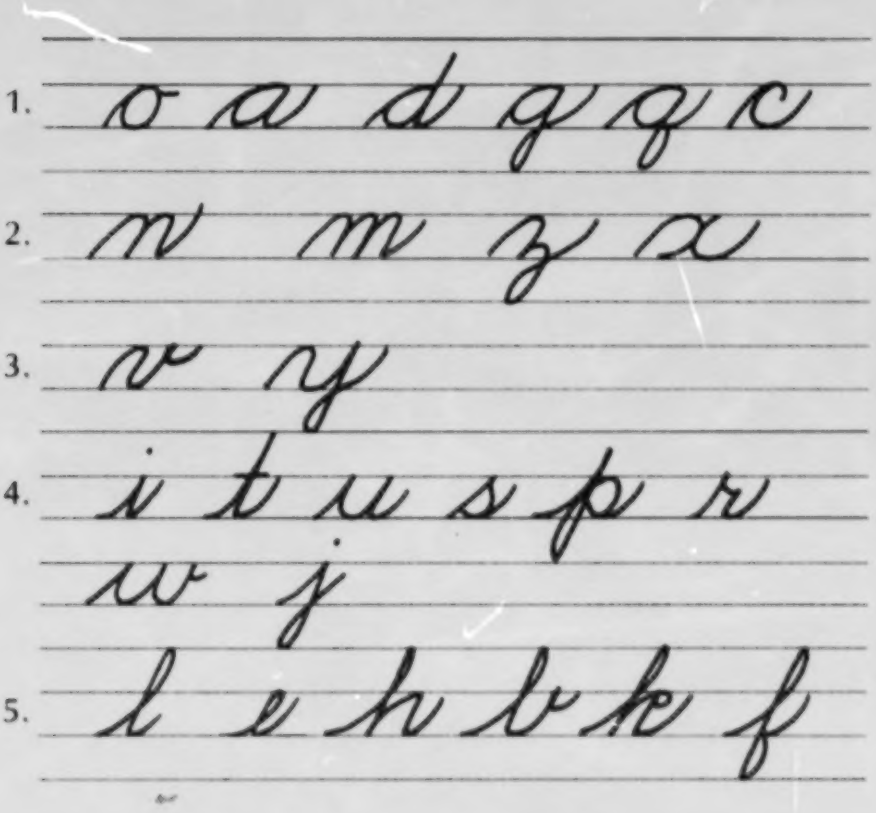
## Sequence

The same considerations apply to choosing a sequence for teaching cursive letters as to choosing a sequence for teaching printed letters. Here is one possible sequence for teaching lower case cursive letters (note that letters formed in a similar manner have been grouped together; there are five such groups):

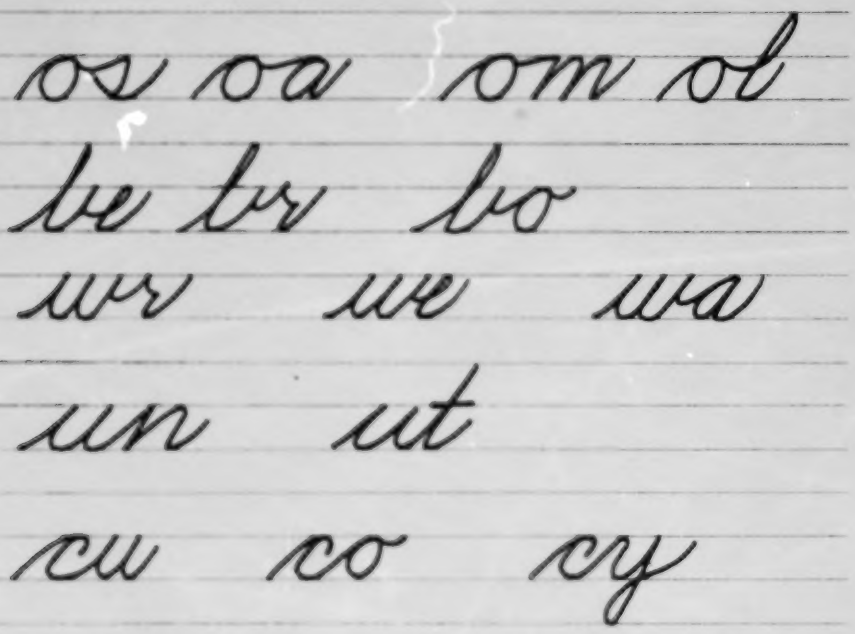



Here is a possible sequence for teaching upper case cursive letters (once again, notice the groupings):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A O | 4. I J | 7. G S |
| 2. C E | 5. T F | 8. D L |
| 3. P B R | 6. N M H K U V W X Y Z | 9. Q |

## Joins

Joins are easily mastered in looped cursive writing, since the join stroke is a part of each letter. Here are some examples:





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# Loop-free Cursive; Egg-and-Stick Printing

## Learning Loop-Free

Loop-free cursive writing is an Italic-based hand. Italic writing was developed in Italy during the Renaissance as an alternative to the Gothic writing of northern Europe, which was time consuming and often illegible. It satisfied the need for a quick, simple, and legible handwriting.

Like its early counterpart, modern loop-free writing is quick, simple, and legible. In fact, the shapes of the letters (both upper and lower case) resemble the shapes of printed letters. This offers a learning advantage to students who have mastered printing (especially egg-and-stick), and who continue to be exposed to printing on billboards, on highway signs, on television, in magazines, in newspapers, as well as in their school textbooks: loop-free writing simply requires them to adapt their printing skills, learn to add entry and exit strokes (joins), and space the resulting words.



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## Egg-and-Stick Printing Models

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a b c d e f g h i j

k l m n o p q r s t

u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H

I J K L M N O

P Q R S T U V

W X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

( . , : ; ? ! " " )



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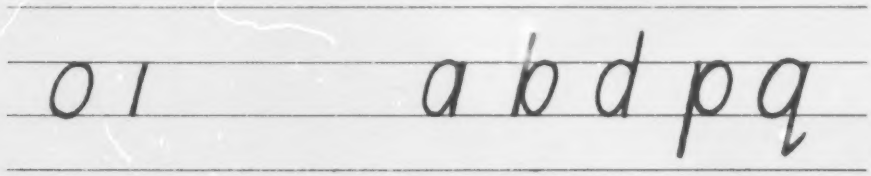
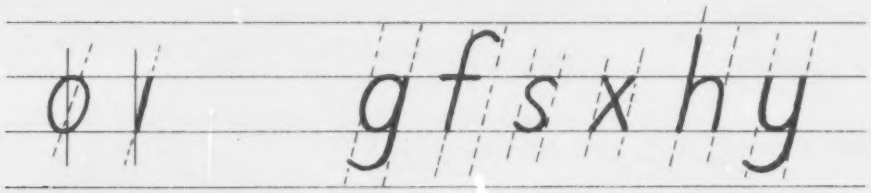
## Learning Egg-and-Stick Printing

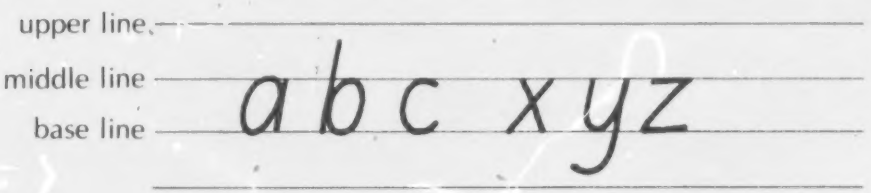
Whereas lower case ball-and-stick letters are based on circle shapes and vertical sticks, lower case egg-and-stick letters are based on an egg shape and slanted stick.



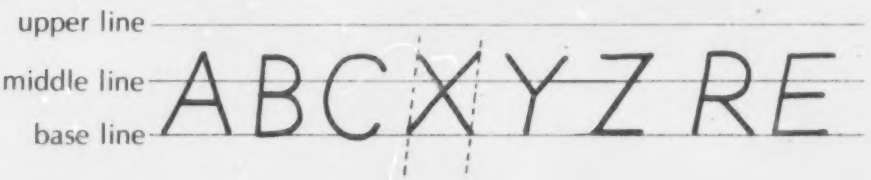
The slant of the letters should be between 5° and 10° off vertical to the right.



The lower case letters are written between a base line and a middle line. Ascenders occupy ¾ of the space above the middle line, while descenders occupy ¾ of the space below the base line.




The capital letters (upper case) should be 1½ spaces high (i.e., 1½ times the distance from base line to middle line). Note that the cross bars come just below the middle line, at half the letter height.



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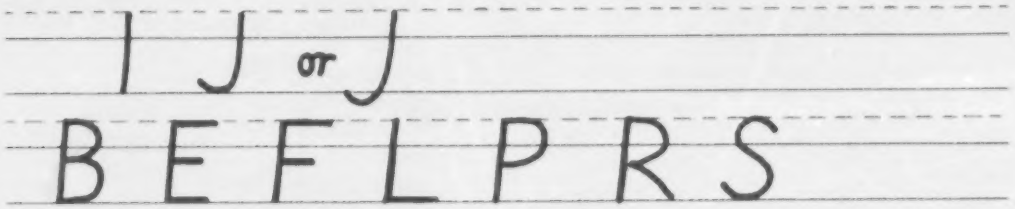
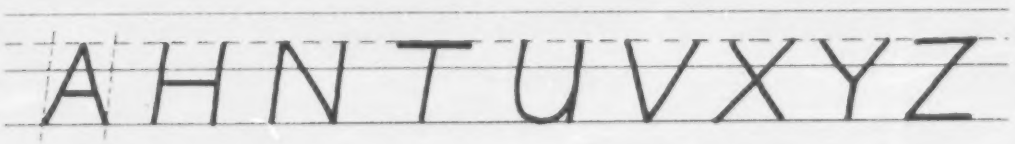
The widths of the upper case letter vary. They are grouped here according to width, from narrowest to widest.

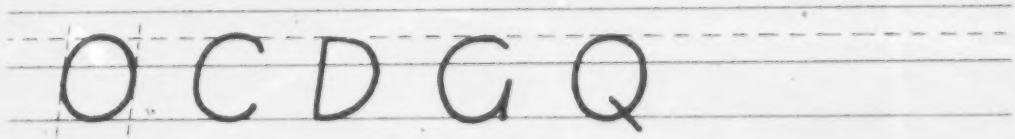
The width of letters in the first group is ½ their height:



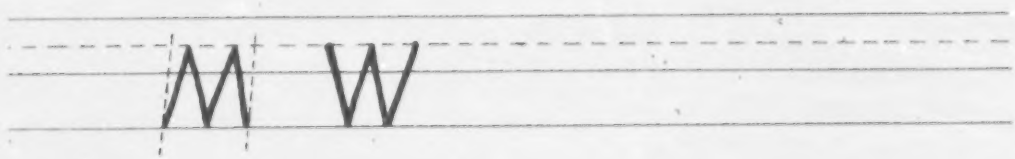

The width of letters in the second group is ¾ their height:



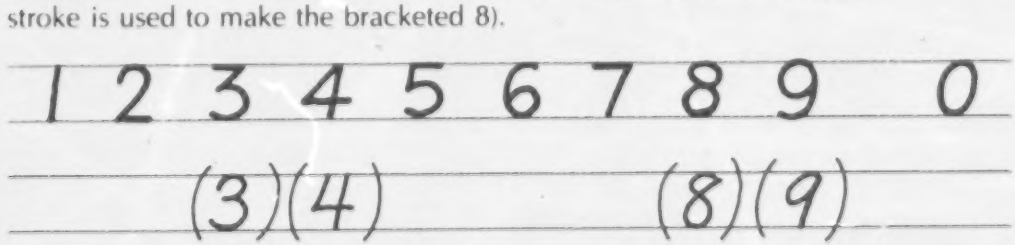

The width of letters in the third group is ⅞ their height:




The width of letters in the fourth group is the same as their height:




The numbers are written within the base line and the middle line. They have the same slant as the upper and lower case letters. Notice that one continuous stroke is used for all but the 4, 5, and 8 (one continuous stroke is used to make the bracketed 8).



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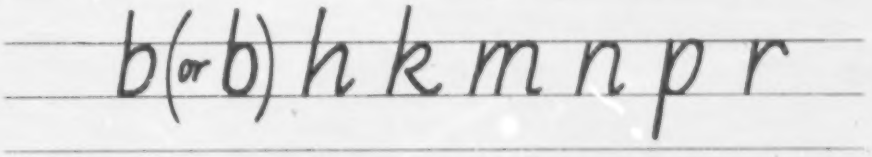
## Lower Case Loop-free Letters

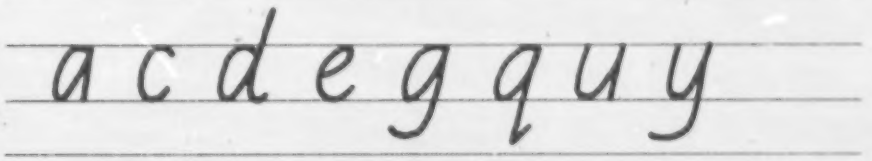
Transforming the egg-and-stick letter shapes of adapted printing into cursive writing requires little modification. To teach the few modifications there are, divide the small letters of the alphabet into the following groups instead of presenting them from a to z (the upper case letters require virtually no modification):

1. straight stroke letters

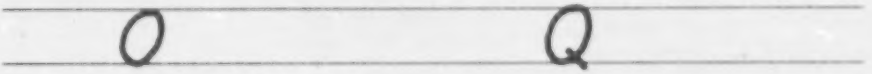
2. letters formed using a clockwise stroke (note that k is the only letter that requires appreciable modification so it can be written in one continuous stroke)



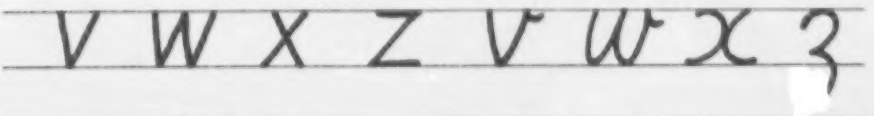
3. letters formed using a counter-clockwise stroke (note that the letter a begins with a push stroke from a different starting position, and that the letters c, d, g, and q do as well)



4. the basic egg shape (an alternate form of the letter q can be made using this shape)



5. angled letters (note that these letters have alternate forms that are slightly more fluid)

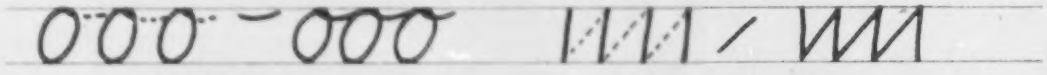


6. push stroke letters (the push stroke is the same one used to start the letter a)

s for f

## Loop-free Cursive Joins and Spacing

Once students have mastered the techniques involved in producing individual letters, they can give their handwriting cursive flow by adding joins and learning how to space letters and words. There are two types of join used in loop-free cursive writing:



(1) the straight join (2) the diagonal join

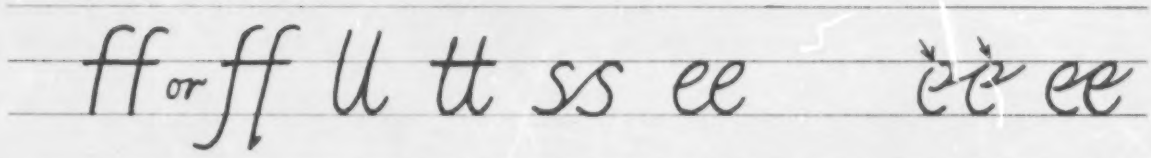
Having students duplicate these models would be a good way to teach joins. It would also be a good way to teach spacing. Observe the narrower spacing between the o's and the wider spacing between the stem strokes. Where there is a break in the writing (i.e., between words), students should be taught to leave a space large enough to accomodate the letter n. Teachers will doubtless have to correct large gapping between words in the early stages.

writing in a loop-free cursive

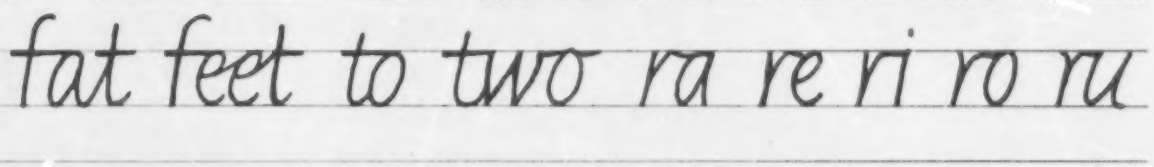
It will soon become obvious that some joins are natural and easy to make while others are awkward, tricky, or impossible. There is a simple rule that covers joining: "join where you can and don't where you can't." In this first example, two methods of joining the double b are suggested.

apple wood bubble bubble

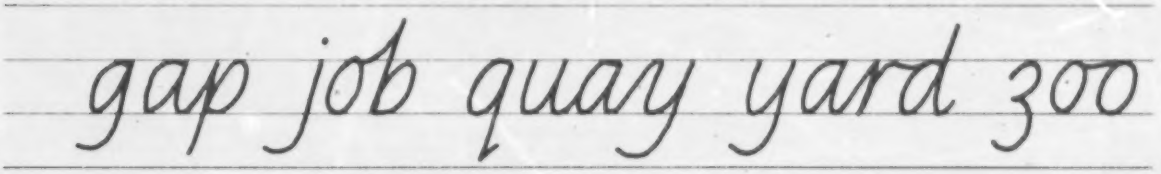
Here are possible techniques for joining other double letters. Notice that an e made with two strokes can have a joiner.



Here are some suggestions for joining from the cross bars in t and f.

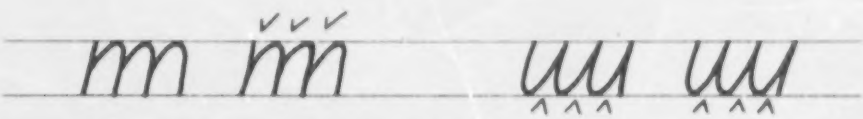


It will soon become obvious that you often don't join to ascenders or from descenders (in the example below there is only one exception to this generalization).



## Loop-Free Exercises

Probably the most important exercise involves making springing arches from slanted stem strokes. This exercise should be used as a warm-up at the beginning of each lesson in the early stages (see also the Preparatory Activities chart in Part D). It sets up the writing rhythm and establishes the pattern of loop-free cursive handwriting. In these examples note that the angle of the springing arches forms a wedge shape.





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The stroke used to make the n shape is the basic stroke used for all the "clockwise" letters. Note that the arch starts to spring away from the stem half way up the stem stroke. The stroke used to make the u shape is the basic stroke used for all the "counterclockwise" letters. Note here that the stem stroke automatically leaves the spring arch on its downward drop after the halfway point. Correct students when you observe the following defects:

upright backhand too open too tight too short inconsistent looped

By grade 3, students will have begun or should soon begin to write between 2 lines. The following exercise is excellent as a writing, joining, and warm-up exercise. It involves combining pairs of each letter of the alphabet between n's and again between u's.

ana nnn | aua nun
bnb bnb ono | bub bub ouo
cnc pnp | cuc pup
dnd qnq qnq | dud quq quq
ene rnr | eue rur
fnf sns | fuf sus
gng tnt | gug tut
hnh unu | huh uuu
ini vnv vnv | iui vuv vuv
jnj wnw wnw | juj wuw wuw
knk xnx xnx | kuk xux xux
lnl yny | lul yuy
mnm znz znz | mum zuz zuz



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Most of the small letter formation and joining problems will show up in these exercises. Teach students to combine capital letters with small letters by having them write out simple Christian names and the names of places throughout British Columbia.

Ann, Billy, Carol, Donald, Eva, etc.
- Fernie, Gastown, Hope, Inverness, etc.

A good double duty exercise is to have the students write out all the new words they are learning.

## Loop-Free Samples

Each of these three samples of loop-free handwriting is distinctive. The first was produced using a felt tip marker. A ball point pen or a pencil might also have been used. The second sample was produced using an Italic fountain pen. The third was produced using a broad edge marker.

1.

Every lesson involving written seatwork could be considered an exercise with added marks given for good handwriting and correct spelling. Children learning good handwriting based on sound letter and number forms develop the skills of hand and eye at an early age. It is to this end that teachers should develop the child's ability to see and correct individual defects.



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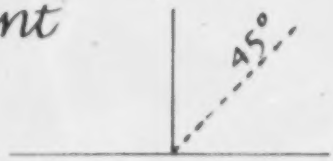
2.

This loop-free handwriting has been written with a broad edge nib or more specifically with an Italic fountain pen. This style of handwriting is now being taught in schools in several countries throughout the world. To supply the growing interest in Italic handwriting in Canada today, one of the larger pen manufacturers has produced a cartridge filled model with three nib sizes. It is well within the price range of students and suitable for classroom work from Grade 4 onward. There are a considerable number of teachers who are teaching a loop-free or Italic handwriting in schools throughout British Columbia at the present time.

pen nib at a constant 45° angle to the writing line




3.

abc & xyz



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# Part D: Lesson Approaches

## Lesson Types

Depending on its objectives, a handwriting lesson will fall into one or more of four categories:

(1) Introductory;

(2) Maintenance;

(3) Diagnostic/Remedial;

(4) Refinement.

Introductory lessons are those in which a handwriting activity or letter form is first introduced and explained. Maintenance lessons are those in which the whole class engages in practice and review activities designed to maintain acquired skills. Diagnostic/Remedial lessons are those in which the focus is on individual writing difficulties (for information on what problems to look for and on what to do about them, see "Part E: Evaluation and Refinement"). Refinement lessons are those in which students learn to tighten up their handwriting skills and standards.

Teachers will find lessons of all four types occurring at every stage of a handwriting program. Obviously, however, the earlier stages will contain more Introductory lessons, while the later stages (e.g., Stage Six: Refinement and Individualization) will contain more Refinement lessons designed to consolidate student handwriting skills, give their writing greater fluidity, speed without loss of legibility, and a more personal style.

## Creating a Lesson Plan

The following is a list of handwriting lesson plan components together with a description of what each involves. Teachers planning a handwriting lesson should try to include all of these ingredients.

Objective(s): Using the foregoing description of lesson types, a teacher should clarify the objectives of a lesson. Keeping the objective in mind will help a teacher select materials, activities, and criteria for evaluation.

List of Materials:

When planning a handwriting lesson, teachers should consider what special materials or physicial preparations will be required. Is a wall chart of alphabet letters on display (see "Part A; Preparation")? Are individual student charts required? Does the chalkboard need to be lined for printing or writing letters? Is colored chalk required? Will the students need alphabet cards, picture cards, or word cards? Do books containing print or handwriting samples need to be brought in? What kinds of writing or coloring utensils will students need — wax crayons, primary pencils, HB pencils, pens? What kinds of paper will students need — newsprint, large sheets of teacher-lined paper, ruled exercise books, paper with interlined lines, or plain blank sheets? Will a demonstration area need to be cleared in the classroom? Do the desks need to be arranged so as to facilitate group work?

Motivation Activities:

These are designed to introduce the lesson topic and arouse student interest. Setting a tangible short or long-term goal (e.g., putting together a Christmas card over a series of lessons) is helpful. Another good technique is to involve students in some form of physical activity (e.g., drawing letter shapes in the air when teaching an introductory lesson on a particular letter). Posing questions is also an effective way to motivate students (e.g., asking them to find and name letters posted around the class or to describe the method used to produce a particular letter), and most students especially enjoy tackling puzzle questions (e.g., ask students to identify the letters you have used to make a "letter monster" — see the activities suggested for Stage Four in "Part B: Handwriting Objectives and Activities"). For Diagnostic/Remedial lessons you might begin by having students criticize examples of faulty letter formation, and for almost any kind of lesson, a short anecdote or story is sure to arouse interest.

Preparatory Activities:

Once student interest is aroused, it is a good idea to have them prepare to learn or practise a particular letter by doing some preparatory activities. This involves practising the stroke(s) that will be required to produce the letter. A chart listing preparatory activities appropriate to teaching various letters has been included with this section, and teachers who are teaching loop-free cursive writing will find some preparatory exercises listed in "Part C: Models" under the heading "Loop-Free Exercises."

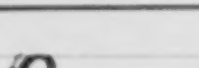
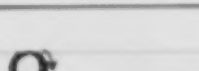
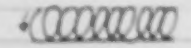
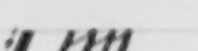
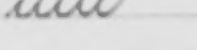
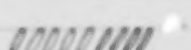
Instruction and Practice:

Once you have demonstrated the technique involved in producing or practising a letter, you may wish to have students form groups and work in centres. A variety of media can be used by the students (e.g., paper, chalkboards, cloth) and you can assign handwriting activities that reinforce their skills and knowledge in other areas (e.g., you can assign handwriting activities that test their knowledge of geographic terms, animal names, important people, or abbreviations).

Evaluation:

Evaluation is the procedure whereby a teacher assesses a student's progress, and then lays out fresh goals for him or her to focus on. Evaluation can be an ongoing part of every lesson (e.g., if the teacher circulates and makes helpful comments while students practise). Once students have begun to develop an aesthetic and critical sense they can, with your help, begin to evaluate their own handwriting. "Part E: Evaluation and Remediation" contains suggestions on how to promote student self-evaluation.

## Preparatory Activities

| | Example | Purpose | Descriptive Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | general warm up plus preparation for<br>a O a d g q | Make eight counter clockwise revolutions using 1 letter space |
| 2 |  | general warm up plus preparation for<br>2 | Make eight clockwise revolutions using 1 letter space: (a) top start, (b) bottom start |
| 3 |  | general warm up plus preparation for letter connection where an over sweep is involved | Make eight counter clockwise revolutions using 4 letter spaces |
| 4 | | general warm up plus preparation for letter connection where an under sweep is involved | Make eight clockwise revolutions using 4 letter spaces |
| 5 | | general warm up plus preparation for reduction of letter size | Make eight counter clockwise revolutions using 4 letter spaces from upper to lower case height |
| 6 | | general warm up plus preparation for reduction of letter size | Make eight clockwise revolutions using 4 letter spaces from upper case to lower case height |
| 7 |  | general warm up plus preparation for<br>R P B | Make eight superimposed vertical strokes: (a) unjoined, (b) joined |
| 8 | | general warm up plus preparation for<br>w w y | Make five to eight strokes up and down slanted under swing strokes five to eight spaces, one space in height |
| 9 |  | general warm up plus preparation for<br>b f h k l e | Make five to eight joined up and down looped strokes five to eight spaces one space in height |
| 10 |  | general warm up plus preparation for<br>m n m n | Make five to eight over swing five to eight spaces one space in height |
| 11 |  | general warm up plus preparation for<br>a x w x y z m n | Make beginning over swings, turn centre left one space in size and height |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | | general warm up plus preparation for<br>H X W X y z m n | Make modified beginning over swings (unconnected) one space in size and height |
| 13A<br>13B<br>13C | | general warm up plus preparation for<br>E D<br>P R<br>B J F | Make eight counter clockwise horizontal ovals one space in size (unjoined) |
| 14 | | general warm up plus preparation for<br>S D s r | Join modified S forms (one space joined) |
| 15 | | general warm up plus preparation for<br>W f p t i | Join vertical strokes without loops |
| 16 | Straight Red Line +<br>Solid Blue<br>Solid Green<br>Striped Brown | for use with all letters to aid in the development and maintenance of letter formation by re-enforcing letter parts – their shape, their tallness, and their closed or open areas | Color special areas of letters (solid shading for closed spaces, colored lines for unclosed spaces) |
| 17 | Red Straight Line<br>Blue Line<br>Red Straight Line<br>Yellow Line<br>Blue Line<br>Green Line | to aid in the development and maintenance of letter formation by emphasizing each specific movement in the earlier forms of all letters | Use separate colors to indicate each specific movement |
| 18 | aaa fff hhh | for use with all letters to aid in the development and maintenance of uniformity of form | Join one letter in a group of three |
| 19 | i m n j k | for use with all letters to emphasize uniformity of slant within letters | Dot colored lines |
| 20 | llhk lpfy<br>aggcd ggdy | for use with all letters to aid the development and the maintenance of slant, size and space within groups of letters | Join letters with similar characteristics |
| 21 | opwf bmye<br>ampx oxyk<br>dwok | for use with all letters to aid the development and the maintenance of slant, size, and shape | Join letters with varying characteristics (some of which do not line with ease) |

## Sample Lesson Plans

The following sample lesson plans have been provided to illustrate the differences among the four types of lesson (introductory, maintenance, diagnostic/remedial, and refinement). Each also illustrates the appropriate teaching technique for a particular development stage.

### Stage Three Lesson (Introductory)

Objectives:

This is an introductory lesson, designed to teach students

- to write lower case *a* and *o* with attention to size, slant, and stroke;
- to correctly position their paper for cursive writing;
- to practise handwriting posture;
- to evaluate their writing with the assistance of the teacher.

Materials:

You will require

- a cursive alphabet displayed around the room;
- several sets of large individual alphabet cards showing the lower case cursive *a* and the lower case cursive *o* with directional arrows;
- a lined demonstration area on the chalkboard for easy viewing by the students;
- teacher-made wide-lined paper or wide-lined fooslcap;
- sharp HB pencils.

| | |
|---|---|
| Motivation Activities: | Follow this procedure:<br>• display the two cards showing the letters to be learned;<br>• have students name the letters and discuss similarities;<br>• have them draw the letters in the air, paying particular attention to formation and direction. |
| Preparatory Activities: | Follow this procedure:<br>• have students clear desks;<br>• discuss briefly the elements of good posture;<br>• distribute paper and pencils;<br>• assist students with positioning of paper and pencil grip;<br>• demonstrate warm-ups on chalkboard (see Preparatory Activities Chart) and have students copy them on paper. |
| Instruction and Practice: | Follow this procedure:<br>• demonstrate lower case letter *o* on the chalkboard;<br>• have students write a line or two of *o*'s, leaving a finger space between each of them;<br>• give individual letter cards to those having difficulty so that they may trace over them;<br>• repeat this procedure for the lower case cursive *a*. |
| Evaluation: | While students are working, circulate and comment. Have students circle or box their best letter. Allow them to display their work. |

## Stage Two Lesson (Maintenance)

Objectives:

This is a maintenance lesson, designed to remind students how to

- print legibly and uniformly within defined guidelines the lower case letters that have circular formations and straight lines;
- print the letters with attention to spacing

Materials:

You will require

- wide-spaced lines drawn on the lower half of your chalkboard;
- desk-sized newsprint on which you have drawn wide-spaced lines;
- whole chalk, primary pencils, and wax crayons;
- a large printed classroom alphabet;
- individual alphabets taped to students' desks (see figure 11);
- several sets of large alphabet cards, each showing a lower case letter that has circular formations and straight lines.

Figure 11

a b c d e g o p q

Motivation and Preparatory Activities:

Follow this procedure:

- display the alphabet cards individually and have the students name them;
- have the students draw the letters in the air (make sure that they are moving their arms in the right direction);
- talk about the common characteristics of the letters (i.e., all have circles and straight lines, all the tall letters are the same height, all the short letters are the same height, all have beginning points and directional arrows);
- have the students find and name these letters in the classroom alphabet.

Instruction and Practice:

Divide the students into two groups — one to work at the chalkboard and one to work on paper at tables and desks. Have each student

- choose a letter card and put it where it can be seen easily;
- trace over the letter with an index finger (several times), starting at the beginning dot and following the arrows;
- decide whether the letter is a short letter or a tall letter (will the letter fill one space or two spaces?);
- print the letter several times in a row, leaving a letter-sized space after each letter;
- remember to fill the spaces and follow the arrows.

After evaluation (see below), have the students return their cards and each choose another.

Evaluation:

Have each student choose his or her best letter and draw a box around it or put a happy face on it. Check these letters.

## Stage One Lesson (Diagnostic/Remedial)

Objectives:

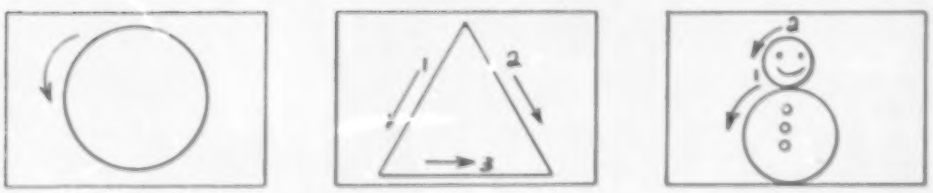
This diagnostic/remedial lesson can be used if you find that students have trouble recognizing and producing simple letter shapes. Specifically, this lesson will teach them to

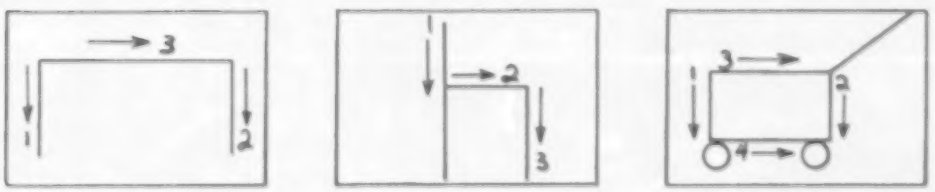
- follow directions (both oral and visual);
- reproduce simple shapes and forms with a variety of media.

Materials:

Have available unlined chalkboard space, large unlined desk size paper, cleared sand box area, large paint brushes and easels, finger paint and paper, etc.

Prepare several identical sets of (8½" x 11") cards showing examples of simple shapes and forms in thick felt pen with directional arrows.



| | |
|---|---|
| Motivation and Preparatory Activities: | Follow this procedure:<br>• hold up cards and have students name the shapes (e.g. circle, line, triangle);<br>• discuss reason for arrows (e.g., up, down, left, right);<br>• as each card is shown, have the students draw shapes in the air following the arrows. |
| Instruction, Practice, Evaluation: | Set up a number of classroom centres and divide students into groups according to number of centres. Then give these directions to students:<br>• choose a card;<br>• take it to your centre;<br>• put it where you can see it easily;<br>• copy it, remembering to follow the arrows;<br>• have a friend watch you make a shape to see that you follow the arrows; then you watch your friend make a shape;<br>• return the card and take another one. |
| Remediation: | Allow students who have difficulty to copy several different cards. Then repeat this activity on another day to allow students the use of different media. As students work, move around and observe that they are performing correctly. |

## Stage Six Lesson (Refinement)

Objectives:

This is a fairly advanced refinement lesson that will allow students

- to examine various and more elaborate forms of printing;
- to practise some of the letters from several of the printing styles;
- to practise printing without the use of guidelines.

Materials:

You will require

- 8½" x 11" newsprint lined and unlined;
- 8½" x 11" foolscap lined and unlined;
- sharp pencils and good quality pens;
- several books showing various styles of printing (e.g., art and classical books, fairy and folk tales, nursery rhymes, a selection of newspapers, and old Christmas cards);
- illustrations of various printing styles on charts and chalkboard (if possible).

Encourage students to bring from home any samples of other styles of printing. This might include sources as old family Bibles and religious books, family trees, or other old documents.

Motivation Activities:

Follow this procedure:

- draw attention to various styles of printing around the classroom; if possible have them labelled or typed; briefly discuss origin of letter types;
- provide students with time to examine various forms of printing;
- discuss particular characteristics of each.

Preparatory Activities: Use the Preparatory Activities Chart. Choose activities appropriate for the letters you wish to have students work on. Allow practice time for preparatory exercises on lined newsprint. Emphasize ease and fluidity of movement. To encourage ease and flow of hand movement, popular music with a definite moderate rhythm could be used.

Instruction and Practice: Follow this procedure:

- have students choose a style and either sit individually or in groups so as to best use the model;
- have students begin practice work on lined newsprint, paying careful attention to letter formation, size, slant, and stroke (circulate and give assistance where needed);
- suggest that students try several letters from a variety of styles;
- encourage students to attempt a few printing styles on unlined newsprint;
- have the students who are ready print one complete alphabet on either lined or unlined foolscap with a good quality pen.

This lesson could easily be first in a group of lessons that culminate in having the students print and design their own Christmas cards:

- 1st lesson — trying various printing styles;
- 2nd lesson — trying various pens (e.g., thick and fine felt tipped pens, fountain pens, nylon tipped pens, floating ball pens, or straight pens with specialized nibs);

- 3rd lesson — choosing a printing form and a writing tool and completing an alphabet on unlined foolscap;

- 4th lesson (based on a language lesson) — creating an appropriate Christmas message for inside the cards and completing it, paying particular attention to spacing and alignment;

- 5th lesson — finishing messages for all the cards and (in an art lesson) designing a frontpiece;

- 6th lesson—practising a distinctive and legible signature to finish the cards.

Evaluation:

As this particular lesson does not revolve around one particular printing style, evaluation would be an on-going activity during the next few lessons. Once students gain an aesthetic appreciation of the print form they can perform some self-evaluation.

# Part E: Evaluation and Remediation

## Evaluation

Evaluation is a necessary component of any handwriting lesson. It allows for early recognition of areas requiring correction. Evaluation is most effective when done co-operatively by the teacher and student. As students grow in maturity and proficiency, they should be encouraged to move towards a greater degree of self-evaluation. They should become increasingly able to give and accept constructive opinions, criticism, and compliments concerning their handwriting.

At every stage, students should be given opportunities to compare their writing with what they were previously able to do. They should also compare it with the model of what they wish to achieve. The choice of models may change from time to time as maturity and ability develop. Ultimately the teacher should, while encouraging individuality, guide students to select models which will allow them to write legibly and easily.

The two pages following contain a suggestion for a wall chart and a student self-evaluation sheet. For the wall chart, teachers should choose the appropriate word ("print" or "write"). The self evaluation sheet provides for ten monthly handwriting evaluations. For each handwriting aspect the student should simply put a check in either the "Satisfactory" or "Non-Satisfactory" box (S, N/S) and add a brief explanatory phrase under "Reason."

We print/write well because what we print/write will be read by someone — even ourselves!

We make clear letter formations.

We print/write with ease.

We print/write simply and quickly.

We print/write carefully and neatly.

We adjust our printing/writing to fit the purpose.

We size up our own printing/writing.

We enjoy printing/writing.



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## STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

| | DATE | S | N/S | REASON | DATE | S | N/S | REASON | DATE | S | N/S | REASON | DATE | S | N/S | REASON | DATE | S | N/S | REASON |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Slant | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spacing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Formation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stroke | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Size | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pencil/Pen Pressure | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | DATE | S | N/S | REASON | DATE | S | N/S | REASON | DATE | S | N/S | REASON | DATE | S | N/S | REASON | DATE | S | N/S | REASON |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Slant | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spacing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Formation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stroke | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Size | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pencil/Pen Pressure | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## Selected Handwriting Defects and Remedial Measures

| Defect and Cause | Remedial Measures |
|---|---|
| writer's cramp from holding pencil/pen too tightly | • Provide an opportunity for students to engage in relaxation exercises (i.e., class breaks and P.E.).<br>• Have students make large loops or circles in the air with the whole arm.<br>• Have students make similar shapes on the chalkboard with the finger and then with chalk.<br>• Have students make circles in sand and finger paint, then with crayons, and finally with pencil and paper.<br>• Encourage rhythmical movement. |
| reversals (i.e., b, d or p, q, g) | • Provide students with individual alphabet samples.<br>• Isolate reversed letters for special attention. |
| Lack of printing/writing readiness: poor muscular co-ordination; poor hand-eye co-ordination | • Provide experiences that will enable students to develop motor skills: (e.g., informal construction with appropriate drawing tools, drawing on chalkboard, clay modeling, paper cutting, or rhythmical ball bouncing).<br>• Arrange handwriting lessons when the student is not tired.<br>• Have younger students work at chalkboard with lines 4" apart.<br>• Increase line widths. |

| | |
|---|---|
| poor letter formation | • Isolate letters that need study; drill these alone and in combination.<br>• Help students visualize distinctive qualities of letter and help them practise motions for forming it.<br>• Lead students to develop self-evaluation skills. |
| extreme slant | • Check correct paper position.<br>• The student's writing arm may be too close to the body. Direct the writing movement toward centre of body.<br>• If the student's thumb appears to be too stiff, check and correct pencil/pen grip.<br>• Check to see that the pen/pencil is not held too far from the point.<br>• Check and correct posture. |
| mixed slant | • Help the student develop self-evaluation skills.<br>• Provide paper with slanted guide lines and place it under the student's writing paper. |
| poor word spacing caused by incorrect beginning and ending strokes | • Have the student begin the stroke just under the tip of the previous ending stroke.<br>• Instruct students to allow space for one letter when working on letters with no beginning stroke. |
| faulty alignment caused by excessive speed or carelessness | • Provide wide-spaced paper.<br>• Give regular warm-up practice on paper (or chalkboard) with base lines. |

| | |
|---|---|
| irregular size of letters | • Review letter formation.<br>• Have students practise with interlined paper.<br>• Provide teacher-made interlined paper for students to use as a guide under their regular work. |
| apparent physical problems, indicated by the abnormal writing position of body, head, arm, hand, or by unusual head movement | • Refer to parents and professionals as soon as problems are noticed. |
| Evidence of eye problems: redness, squinting, closing one eye, watering eyes, general fatigue | • Refer to parents and professionals as soon as problems are noticed. |

# Resource Materials and Bibliography

## Selected Resource Materials

**D'Nealian Handwriting series.** Donald N. Thurber, author, Dale R. Jordan, advisor. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1978. *Teacher's Edition - Readiness; Teacher's Edition - Book 1; Teacher's Edition - Book 2; Teacher's Edition - Book 3; Teacher's Edition - Book 4; Teacher's Edition - Book 5; Teacher's Edition - Book 6; Teacher's Edition - Book 7; Teacher's Edition - Book 8.* This series provides a complete skills program together with students' exercises. It features the use of a continuous stroke to form most manuscript letters. Three simple joining strokes make the transition from manuscript to cursive.

*Handwriting.* Rikie Schieven - Parr. Toronto: Green Tree Publishing, 1978. This book suggests the basic routines to help students develop the rhythm needed to write legibly and clearly. It contains a section on readiness and writing positions.

*Handwriting Guide (K - 6) Printing Cursive Writing.* School District No. 70 (Alberni, B.C.). 1977.

*Handwriting Hints.* School District No. 35 (Langley, B.C.), n.d.

**I Can Write series.** (Loop Free). Tom Gourdie. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Education. *Stage 1 - Preliminary Writing Patterns; Stage 2 - Lower case alphabet; Stage 3 - Joining the Letters; Stage 4 - Capital alphabet; Stage 5 - Practice Material;* Spirit dupiicator masters.

*Interim Elementary Curriculum Guide for Handwriting.* Province of Alberta Department of Education, 1965.

**The MacLean Method of Writing series.** H. B. MacLean and Grace Bollert. Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing. *My First Printing Book; My Second Printing Book; Practice Compendium 3; Practice Compendium 4; Practice Compendium 5; Practice Compendium 6; Senior Compendium; Teachers' Complete Manual,* Revised. A complete course of instruction in the technique and pedagogy of the MacLean Method of Writing for teachers of Elementary and Junior High by Henry B. MacLean. The Teacher's Manual has been written for the purpose of giving help to the teaching of writing. It should be used in conjunction with each Printing Book and Compendium.

**Writing Our Language series.** Marion Monroe. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1976. *Book 1 Revised Teacher's Edition; Book 2 Revised Teacher's Edition; Transition Book Revised; Book 3 Revised Teacher's Edition; Book 4 Revised Teacher's Edition; Book 5 Revised Teacher's Edition; Book 6 Revised Teacher's Edition.* This series contains ideas and suggestions to provide teachers with a variety of approaches for teaching handwriting.

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